

THE NOOSE



A RETROSPECTIVE: 4 DECADES

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Archival Collection

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A number of these poems were additionally published in several earlier small collections. These chapbooks were as follows—*Psalms for a Late Season*. New Orleans, Iconograph Press, 1942. *No Is the Night*. Taos, 1949. *Come Curse to the Moon*. Ranches of Taos, 1952 (?). *The Anatomy of Proserpine*. Ranches of Taos, 1955. *A Poet's Breath*. Ranches of Taos, Motive Book Shop, 1950. *The Wrath Wrenched Splendour of Love*. Ranches of Taos, 1956. *The Heart in Naked Hunger*. Ranches of Taos, Motive Book Shop, 1958. *To Wed Beneath the Sun*. Ranches of Taos, 1958 (?). *The Ogres Who Were His Henchmen*. Eureka, CA, Hearse Press, 1958. *Inwade to Briney Garth*. Taos, Este Es Press, 1960. *The Feel of Sun and Air upon Her Body*. Eureka, CA, Hearse Press, 1960. *A Unicorn When Needs Be*. Taos, Este Es Press, 1963. *Hermes Past the Hour*. Taos, Este Es Press, 1963. *You, Mark Antony, Navigator Upon the Nile*. Taos, 1964. *Angels Fall, They Are Towers*. Taos, Este Es Press, 1965. *Three on a Match*, with Wendell B. Anderson and Cerise Parallon, Taos, 1966. *Modern Onions and Sociology*. Ranches of Taos, Saint Valentine Press, 1978. *Never Will Dan Cause No One To*. Albuquerque, Holy Terrible Editions, 1978. *You Don't Have To*. Albuquerque, Amalgamated Distribution Enterprises, 1978. *What You Too Can Do To And*. Albuquerque, Cartwheel Entercounter Publications, 1978. *Honeymoon Swimming*. Albuquerque, Tap-Water Springs Editions, 1978. *Yester Dream Portraits of Cutting*. Albuquerque, Nicodemus Crocodile Publications, 1978. *The Liver You Should*. Albuquerque, Modern Gander Wing Editions, 1978. *A Short to Holy*. Albuquerque, Laid-Back Boom-crang Editions, 1978. *Why We Ask You To*. Albuquerque, Apple-Whetted Contrition Press, 1978. *Roma A Fat At*. Albuquerque, Instantaneous Centipede Publications, 1978. *What We Could Do*. Albuquerque, Almond-&Honey Petrowsky Publications, 1978. *Sting Intere*. Albuquerque, Teocalli Tadpole Publications, 1979.

Also: Untermeyer, Louis—*An Uninhibited Treasury of Erotic Poetry*. New York, Dial Press, 1964.

★ ★ ★

"THE GULL IS BY THE SEA"

The gull is by the sea:
in blue stemmings of tide
rising,
to white breakers
lowering.

There are many wings
pinioned—
many, many wings
dipped to the low wind:
where the wild water's
genesis?

Yeates

are many, many wings
and a white crane.

—J. C. Crowe.

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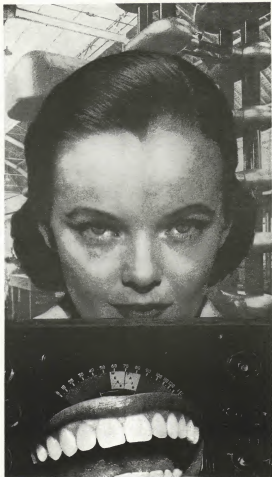
Path of Beauty
August 1938

These 100 poems Selected by John Brandi and Larry Goodell.

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40's

FORSAKING ABSTRACTION

The meditation of the man as man
is another thing than man as poet
another thing than either poet-man
or than man-poet

The meditation on night
is another thing than night
and meditation on man
is a meditation too frightening
for either man-poet or man

All past ages are in man
all past meditations are in
the ultimate meditation
but the ultimate meditation
is neither in man nor man-poet

The ultimate meditation
for all past ages and past meditations
for all these men and poet-men
the ultimate meditation will be
not of the night, but in the night

STRANGE UNKNOWN CITY

You are foreign to me
like an unknown city
where I have walked for days
or years
but where I still lose my way
even at mid-day.

I can point out this street light
or that fire hydrant
or yonder cathedral
with the tall thin spire
and say, yes
I have seen these before
I have seen them many times before.

But still I lose my way
for I know you only
as a strange unknown city
in the night when the mists creep
and I am not sure of your eyes
nor even quite sure of your hands.

PSALM FOR A LATE SEASON AS THE SEA ROLLS
BENEATH A TALL PALE SKY

Part of megrims, whole of malice
torn in thunder
thread through thought
lashing gale on barnacle rock
where a mutilated moon
casts its sallow silver
against the phosphate sea
hiding the periscope
and the drifting, drifting mine
broken from the brine bowels
of this translucent waste.

Waste receive the dead:
the dead will think it kind

None can call the hand of fate,
nor hold an ace in hiding;
so waste, receive the dead
the dead will think it kind.

Phosphor takes the slow disintegration
from birth to death: giving light—
a description of civilization
from the colon backwards.

Part of megrims, whole of malice
torn in thunder
thread through thought
lashing gale on barnacle rock—
waste receive the dead:
the dead will think it kind.

WHAT BABYLON WAS BUILT ABOUT

Is this the age of the machine
must every line ring with mechanical precision
the cool whirl of the dynamo

This is an age of the mind
a mechanical mind stark in the face of dreams
undone where consciousness recedes
fear grasps where calculations fail

Must I write a poetry of the mind
of a stark mechanical mind
must red mean a reign of terror
black the Gestapo hand

My mind is not a mechanical mind
my precision is only the heart's precision

Let them break their hard metaphors
on the sharp fragments I sow
let the dream trickle to the steel heart
and break its flow

Calculation has failed
no dream can flower in their frozen field
the mind is the jungle the heart gave birth in

ADVICE FOR ARMANENTEERS

If you must seek perfection
seek it in an abstraction

The season of destruction
is a season of small rain

The river knows its certain bank
the plover knows his fellow

I will not mourn your wretched wake
though you shatter the world tomorrow

BEING SUFFICIENTLY FORTIFIED

To open a window upon night
is to open night, the mind freshening
growing larger than the window
growing as large as night

The mind thus expanded engulfing the night
becomes also itself night
and large as half the earth and half heaven

And filled with its own light
even as night is filled with its own light

Its own light permeating the whole being
the whole being flowing beyond place
the whole being flowing beyond window

It is the key. Once being opened
open any window upon the night
the night is full. Grow large
with the fullness of the night

THE PALE SALTIMBANQUE

Born half broken from the land
where the pete-kiln flourishes
born
with the broken smile leaning on leer
the teeth half broken
born
or else created too from earth
too poor for color
sallow as the water
that trickles, oozing the brackish moss

Born or else created
and flung
from the womb of God's hand or else
from the womb of God's hand
the womb of his manifold thinking

Flung, and fallen to this estate
half broken as the smile
and the sad sad
eye as crooked as the cap
as crooked as the shoe
it cast from a last
by a cobbler as careless as God too

STRANGE TUNDRA

If the snow reaches
like a barren savannah
let us pray
 for the man of snow
the hard man of ice

Let us pray when the wind lashes
for the hard man of ice
eyes sharp as ice, sharp as blueness
when the wind lashes for the hard man

Let us pray for the man of snow
if the savannahs are barren
if the ice is blue in our throats

METAMORPHOSES OF THE THIRD WHEEL

The center of their fear was the pool's periphery
it was older than the mind

the Sphinx
had staked it out for them in a taciturn moment
then she squatted and monotheism was born
the father a secret

Then the cisterns caved and gold became scarce
the beetle was sacred on Wednesday

the cow
on the seventh day before she calved
her horns sacred requiring daily to be polished
with fat from the buttocks of virgins

And many wealthy scions became priests
soliciting
the daughters of the poor but pure
the operation a delicate one requiring
a studied control of knife and of passion
the adolescent screams warming the jaded lusts

Thus the heirarchy was born
the center severed
the lady quiet now, the birth pains dead
so they painted the windows with ruby
and feasted
the lions stood on leashes at every door

And paved the heart with gold
and removed the brains
through the nasal passages, the priest's hands
laid them in linen and spices
and polished daily
the heifer's young horns
the Sphinx old and sleeping on her side

CONCERNING LESS OF THE SEA

There were others just as queer
but they ate flesh and earned an hourly wage
no curse was theirs but the six days
they waited for their pay

And he had never eaten poppy
he only looked at a wavering star
the light it lost in the midst of his eye
was a sore that was never healed

So they stoned him without violence
the church choir humming its sweetest hymn
and he crawled away into the wood
the star setting at last in his wavering will

And they built a shrine at his birthplace
to remind themselves he was no longer here
their children's children asked, what place is this
and a quietness shook the wavering air

THE CONCESSION PILATE NEVER MADE

Dawn found them sleeping like children
their buttocks bare
the rich togas draping the doors
the fountains playing the perfumed streams

Where was birth to place them in
but this domain
dawn would rule to reason no scepter
for the planet was perfect
their gods
had ordained it such in many past seasons

But the senator had heartburn and his mistress
had her menses
the sheep cast their young
O children in your childish dream
what said
your gods and your goddesses to this

Had they found them different, the senator
or his concubine
and the worms entering them
the shepherds drunk and sleeping on the hill

If the fashion should change but sleep
your buttocks bare, the senator bilious
the shepherds ranging to another, a foreign land
the rod a serpent where the savior passed

IN PRESENCE OF LAUGHTER

The spices in the sun are an image
of the place of spices

drowning in rain
the landscape would be a landscape
of spices still

The sun is a spice of fortuitous flavor
the rain mellows it and the place decays

This image of a land is known
to transcend the obvious and the *in fact*
it is known to transcend the mundane

The place of spices, in sun or rain
is also a place of women, a place of flowers

Are there spice women and spice flowers

But the subtlety of images penetrates
beyond the necessity of discrimination

The women in the sun are likewise an image
of the place of spices

or women in rain
the landscape would be a landscape
of women, of flowers, still

A QUALITY NOT OF ETHER

Least of all the cutting off
of the movements which move
as shadows move with the essence
less obvious than the manifestations
of certain obvious facts

If one is to move against currents
shall the currents listen
shall the shadows become men
the men become obvious manifestations
the manifestations facts

Let essences become less obvious
than the listening current
but let manifestations reside
where the dream is fact
fact the only obvious manifestation

THREE REMOTE AFTERNOONS

And lifted it up above the imagination
which is surely higher than a kite

Lifted it, with the large red tail
the knots strung out like lovers

For a ballast. If I had then
known the me of now

Lifted. Or if I now could remember
oh that me of then

Oh those lovers for ballast
for long red tail

If but the wind (I'm telling you
it's higher than a kite) would huff

THE SPACIAL CANOPY, STAR DREAMED

It was known through the west just like that
and the miseries were no more gaunt than pain
neither was the hunchback, his hump an altar
nor the white mule who once taught school
this was the west as I say from the beginning

Nor the other winter howling as if maimed
the old teeth aching in its rent vitals
the dream was no more a myth than the myths were
and the myths no more than that, only it was dark
and the land was young as any virgin maiden
though it whelped in season and out alas

This is what they want to write about
but the words aren't perfect nor the eye
the hand itself not as steady as it once was
drawing the long bead and squeezing off
the lone Indian dead, as it always was, Kit
so the snow is an hundred sesterces and gone

The cestodes eat the old brain to ancient ruin
no reign of old might equaling the lost dream
a dram of tequila will quench the yearning
but recurring night heightens the old fever
damn their eyes though there once was gold in them
damn their piddling dreams, this world of the west
is awash with the urine of balless whales

Noel
because the war machine is now perfect
Noel
and can destroy the earth
Noel
but will not be used till next time
Noel, Noel

BLUE HYACINTH, PALE BLUE HYACINTH

Was she too once radiant?
You were

And now, you are perfect
perfect
but dead

O Levantine

Her eyes

Perfect

The hair
severely drawn
perfect

The lip
perfect too
and rigid

Rigid as death

.

Primly
perfect
in your bright vase

And crumple
to dust

In my hand.

MAY FALL.

Dusk suggests a season for speculation
when the swine might be stone
when the branches of trees
are not shapes at all

or the sighing

might be stones
restless from the stillness of the day

Suggests that not all felt is known
that a woman's breath
is no less her than her hand
that her hand is no more her
than the longing she says is mythical

Dusk suggests that myths
might grow as weary as stones



50's

FIRST TREE OF AUTUMN

It is spring time colour, a yellow
the blue has not seeped into
though the season now is autumn

The sun is strong upon it, though
the clouds are dark beyond it
and the mountain is dark deep blue

But the light bursts from it
emanating as from the head of Christ
as only Angelico could paint it

Have I grown numb with piety
if sky were yellow as this lone tree
would I acknowledge the waning years

Oh the days in flagrant number
does a seepage of colour spell certain doom
perhaps, perhaps I long for home

HUNTING SEASON

Waking under the wind
of course I fell asleep
under the wind
under
the high ponderosas

The needles were mat
the growl of branch against branch
high in the wind
a troubled
lullaby

Though there is the clatter
of machine gun fire
and the ground
more rubble than I remembered
the blasts of shell-fire
straphing planes

The hunt today, today
is not for hares

AS FURTIVENESS, AS TIME

The small pasture
where the mushrooms grew

Small because of the mountain
small because of the sea

Small because of the marsh
at its edge
where watercress grew

I gathered them pink
a pound or two

And a double handful
of the crisp cress
in the gathering dusk

And the mountain
gathered the small pasture
and its marsh

The sea gathered the mountain

Darkness gathered the sea and us all
all but the sound of the sea

WHERE WE EMBRACE

Home is the bed where we embrace
no storm ever touched us there

The meadows are pure where we embrace
no nettle or poison grows there

The season is spring where we embrace
though frost is thick on our covers

The language is love where we embrace
though the world is shrieking its hate

PASTORAL

The furrow, opening out, cool
warming in the sun
receiving seed, covered

Oh lovely body, yours

THE LOVERS

Revealed in a twist of chance
vulnerable beyond expectation

among the rocks. Features
weatherworn as these

The swell has cast and cast again
The squalls disseminant

and perfect. Now
as lovers riding the storm

Now as lovers warm and sheltered
Our features weatherworn

These rocks are round
and smooth as polished bone

A NUDE, AGAINST LIGHT

The statuette before you, angular
and spindling

 you are not like that
in all the midst of war, the mind that made it

Your ovaled buttocks

 the full thighs
the knee flexed lightly
the halo of light surrounds you—
finds its way among arms and body, forces
its certain way between your legs, slight parted

The window upon the ruined street
the ruined city

 the mind that made it
its spindling torso, the tenuous display
of naked tendons, girder-strung ensemble
un-salvagable as the ruins below

Your thought's upon it

 you are held
betrayed and betrayed in one, the sun is there
your flesh aglow

 the ruins the mind has held
Oh, turning, your motile flesh condemns the lie
in all the midst of war

The light has found you
where you break the myth of ruin the halo
of the sun surrounds you

ADMONITION TO LOVE

No hurt

how short our aim
lamed in our central core
protesting our will to harm
how short our aim

The muzzle of the small deer
seeking succor
the wind there on the flower
I did not seek a star to fall
but it fell in my open hand

I kissed your palm, your throat
I offered you a star
but I came from the front the day before
and you saw the blood in my hand

You saw it blot the season
darker than a sky of rain
I did not kill my brother
the bullet fell short of its aim

BULLTOVEN AMONG THE THORNS

Bully what

 with a bull knife long
and naked to the loins
hacking at it thorn wreathed as a crown
on Christ's own head

Well, what

 with centipedes
and scorpions
 and his umbilicus
open as a window on the land

Oh Buddha in your naked temple
with the incense and the jade
and the priests and wheels of prayer
I give you Jaime

 rolling in a gutter
with his brother

Oh Buddha with your feet
turned up to heaven

 the toe of the prophet
as nourishment for many
 the hoop of want
to create prayers and candles
the tallow a-drip as holy dung

Would that Todd

 with a bull knife long
bull cod Todd, that Greek of Taurus
would that Todd would eunichize
these bellowing hounds of prayer

For the sleeping hell he beat through
and brought us wine

of many virgins
eucharist
of the princess of the isle

THE RAPE

In a bit of a rage
though striving for a certain objectivity
I made good the threat
to write my name across your heart

Now you bewail your discomfiture
—how deeply the letters burn,
how it is all awry

But you were never still a moment
squirming and kicking
spitting in my eyes
—six letters fell across your backside
another circles your navel

No "i" is dotted, no "t" crossed
yet every letter legible in blood
—and that my own
not yours

ESSENCE

Pensive, how parochial
I endanger my deity

For if I put off wanting
wanting neither sex nor love

Or put off hating
hating neither crime nor sorrow

Well, if I put off flesh
I am naked, naked

For if I achieve nothingness
in becoming Godly, then

There is no certain God,
But if I, remaining lustful I

And you, the essential you
perchance at some point

We momentarily meet: there
we have surely noosed Him

DECLARATION AT FORTY

I have loved so many violent loves
without disturbing a single hair

I have broken no marriages
nor healed any. When I love again

May her complacency be shattered
the lawn cluttered with underthings

Her hair mussed and her heart pounding
and may she remember forever

That for one moment she at least
was not utterly alone

THE UNNECESSARY SERPENT

How necessary is the serpent
who skinning himself
does yet remain
in eye and scale

Is this the necessary evil

Avail we would with the artifact of sin

Even dead and ant devoured
the white bone of spine
and a hundred ribs
retell the tale of Adam
with God's sleep upon him

Ah rib of my rib
thou wouldst have given me to eat
though the trickery of the spheres
had not ordained
having pointed the only road to Life:

Thou shalt surely die!

DEAR EMPIRE SMELLING FAIR

The whore and the soldier
are asleep in her bed

Her tit is red with his teeth marks
and her thigh is flecked with his sperm

Naked they sleep in the barren room
white beneath the naked bulb

The dawn is urgent as his wanting was
and comes like him from another land

The naked window is her refuge
and it more than the naked land

His overseas cap is on the sill
with a dollar and loose change

His overseas dream roars in his slumber
as he twitches his empty hand

WINNING

Moving like inevitability

Love is a mouse

Must I say
its grey pelt is
disarming

God-damn
its god-damned teeth

Must I say

They gnaw and gnaw

POTAPHOR IN A WRETCHED WIND

Did you comb the poodle this morning
are all the orders in meticulous order

Sound the whelkin, Mr. Bilkin
tomorrow we sail for Habana

The dolphins will play along the quay
disrupted by an occasional tuna

The deck chairs quite unawares
will always be facing sunward

The captain's board will afford shad roe
and an occasional trio on the tuba

Strangle the maid and throttle the butler
tomorrow we're sailing for Cuba

AN INSISTENCE ON CLIMATE

The froth of waves bedecking the waves
a man's fate surrounds him

his senses
surround him

A bugler blasts a flag to the top
of a high pole

another will blast it
down again

Up or down the sound splinters the air
the rhododendrons vibrate
in their purple shadows

the stones
absorb in muteness, in splendor

This speculation is not of a man's senses
the sea wall checks the waves

the froth
multiplies, disperses, descends
glows phosphorescent

The bugler blows out his brains. War
is declared. Peace is declared

The rhododendrons bloom among stones

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

Pink bosoms beneath white lace
the air is warm

suffused
with delicate whites and pinks

Marauders are in the mountains
attacking the tabernacles

They are burning the Cristos
in their hempen robes
burning
the false hair pungent as damp leaves

The light around the hills
suffused, delicate, glowing, pungent
as damp autumn leaves

The throbbing edge of the sky
touching the smoked hill's edge

There are cries, a few gun-shots
the odour of leaves

Her breasts are bare
her arm pits
pungent as autumn smoke

AMOUR RUSTICA

Strumming an old mandolin
with a piece of broken ivory

The breath of mid-day belching
through the archway

Remove your comb
I would muss your hair a bit

Your sweaty arm-pits
disgust me

If you are that over-heated
go bathe
but first

Light a plum-blossom incense
and bring tequilla and salt

And place them in reach
of the hammock

Hood the parrot
that prying son-of-a-bitch

AFTERMATH OF WAR

It may be that the wind
has changed a little
little as the wind is
the smoke drift
seems changed
though pungent
as the deathstench it holds

If we are dreaming
it is a revolving dream
sucking us into a maelstrom of reality

Reality —that every feather may drop
from every angel
knowing no angel is sparrow

But we may spare our dreaming
mankind we are and we among it
no angel
among us and no devil

The rubble is alive with dung and with sparrows
there god is resting and he is with his own

LETTER TO SCOTT GREER

Yes, it is true
our job is to write

None-the-less, a poem
is to share

What are you like now
I remember you only as you were

I am, essentially
like I always was

Less bitter, perchance
more resigned

None-the-less, a poem
is still a poem

Which ever of us
chances to write it

THE WHITE WHALE, THE WHITE WHALE

Relv if ever the sweet parts tender
the dream if wrung

from soul of dark
my dream is hard as only flesh
where blood is strong as bone

Relv it over

lover come
the sweat as warm and wreathed
and fragrant as the hour's end

Relv sweet meek

sweet bold and break
and tender as the dream we cherish
dream as tall as the bedding's tent
whales as ever lost

and waves
rolling as ever, in lost, in waves
forever rolling in sea's lost waves
and break

Relv for meek the sweet lost cry
warm as breaking from deepest sleep
the foam as wrapped as we
in cline

for Relv if soul
in hell lost slumber, lost as breaking
and your sweet cry on voiceless lips
breaking there from deepest deep

MEN AND WOMEN THAT ARE GONE

A marble urinal
in a scattered junk heap

A great marble urinal
which is some kind of a symbol
of a glorious past

Think of the great men
who have stood before it

Bankers and diplomats
in fine fly-open garments
many no doubt with silk hats
and velvet lapels
judges and clerics

All of them gone now
but this great symbol
in its ruined glory
a monument of their greatness
which is gone

Come now and let us find
a symbol of the great women
which also are now gone

DIRECTIONS

All of the directions that nakedness
might take, the naked lie
the naked truth

 a child in a bathtub
with floating toys and floating
soap designed to look like a floating toy
yes, here you have the naked truth

Or else a lady who takes her clothes off
to music, of course, with a good deal
of horsing around

 no one noticing
for sure whether she's a real blond
or red-head

 with a stampede
of coloured lights and a silhouette
fourteen feet tall

But what I started out to tell you was
they are fucking you right and left
with fear of god and love of country

Death is the naked lie they will have for you
for breakfast, death is the naked truth
warmed over for a midnight snack

NIGHT

My visit fell within the night
night along the attic stair
your night and my own
within the dampness and the grey

You told me what you knew of night
saying had I not known
I knew the night as deep as hell
but this night I had never known

You opened a book from upon the stack
saying it was there
I froze rigid in my mind
knowing only it is here

You opened a window upon the city
and said that it was there
the only knowledge I could comprehend
was that it was here

But you did not tell me in all your wisdom
that it was in your heart
and that was the night that froze me there
that no sun could ever warm

HIJO DE ALGO

I shall fall in the field
and the oxen trample my remains

I shall fall and their stampede
cover me over

My lot and my desolation

My daughters raped
on the door-steps

Their mother raped on the portal

This is the grand glory

This is my heritage
my birthright and my order



60's

AUBADE

I know that shadows inform
my knowledge of reality
the mountain
is more of shadow than myth

Have I asked it to move hither

Neither do I ask the heather
to wither under a sightless flame

Oh waking
the shadows of sleep
haunt your eyes

I ask of you no movement, no fire

These shadows inform
of the reality that is real

DESNUDA

Would you like
that I take off
my ribbon

It only holds in
a song
but a sad little song

It is only
of spring
Shall I

Take off
my blouse
my breasts

Are only
little peaches
their pits

Are bitter
and poison
shall I

Take off
my breeches
oh the scorpions

Would bite you
bite you
I wish you

Would hearken
to my little
sad song

CHRIST HEAD

Thy straight snuzzle
meek and terrible

Formidable as
a ram's prick

Swoon eyed—
I get your point

Castro bearded:
your meaning is perfect

I shall set
the little chapel

Afire. And watch
the blazes

LITTLE HOME SCENE

Because your corset
caught on fire
I am no pyromaniac

Your twat remains
cool as lettuce
my cigarettes remain

Beside the ash tray
the book matches
offering courses in art

Are there as well so you say it
should not have happened

No, Columbus should not have sailed

And look at
what he discovered
besides you got

The corset in _____ a bargain basement
on time payment plan

And it is not
as if I had never
seen your ass before

MY NEW REVELATION FOR THE DAY

The sun rose at 6:22
I took my 22 and shot a magpie
through the eye

Wiping my glasses
getting ready to work
I get the impression that the lenses
are made of rubber

No, I get the impression
that the frames
are made of rubber

Consulting the Almanac
I discover the sun rose at 6:38

I take my 38 and shoot the clock
from the wall sending its hands
flying like a jack-in-the-box

There is goddamn little
in this life that one can depend on
any more, these days

THE DISTANCES

Writing a poem
it is
as if my voice

Came from _____ a long way
off, as out

Of a cave or from
under sea

It is as if
I were talking
to my wife

She looks at me
as if she
might strike me

But she is quietly saying
come back

FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Two doves
 or else white pigeons
with ringed

Red eyes
 Wings spread ready
for flight

Supported by
 delicate wires
visible beneath

The purity
 of white
foolscap

Our friends
 have sent these
with a rooster

Of Danish glass
 and pewter
to brighten

The place
 where we are
a cock

And two doves
the goodness
of our

Long lost
beloved
friends

Spitting

In the water
 watching
it flow slowly

Away, seeing
 some sea
creature grab

For whatever
 it is
—What is it?

Here I have
 given
something

Of myself
 I am sure
it is not

Likely
 to change
the tide

I have sat

On my ass
for forty-
seven years

Waiting
as Miller would
have it

For an angel
to pee in
my beer

So why
should I
panic now

And rush out
into a
thunder storm

Trying to catch
a cup-
ful of rain

BORN-A-LIAR BULLTOVEN

He told one woman
that his name
was Julius Caesar

And he told another
he was
Jesus Christ

He said once
he was
from Tuscany

And another time
his home
was Nazareth

He was thirty-two
he said
and a carpenter

And he had been
in Gaul
and had a brother

Yes, he was
fatherless
he said

And he was cut
from out
his mother

Method

In the waking jungle
pepsinated
with the dawn heat

Spawning
seven numbered
jack hands

So an angel walked
out naked
naked with real hair

At her arm pits
the pit of her real hair at

Groins. Groaning beneath
my naked
touch, eyes shut

Struck blind with
 sublime spasms
rocking our souls

In violent gentle
night, night rhythms

Listen, listen
gentle, gentle
song of mine

Listen to our gentle
pulsing
pepsinated song

WRITING POETRY

Winter if we work
white pigs rutting

How the farrow
fake the snow

Two are eaten
a third is fattened

Circe, our sister
let no one know

Kissing

Farewell

I am thinking of a sky full
of light

full of cloud forms
that let the light through
for the air
is full of light

the grass
is full of light

Three small children

silhouetted
on the horizon are full of light
I can
hear their laughter

But I do not see the sun

I do not feel
the light breeze
that carries their voices

We are dealing here in the dispersion
of alphabets and numbers

You have eyes in your head
a head upon your neck

but how
you have absented yourself from there
to the tips of your toes

An old crone

Who would
keep you
talking

Waving a tit
or heisting
a soiled hem

When the hour
is late
and the game

Is not worth
the candle
blow it out

This is
the muse
perchance

Surprised
you will find
yes, perchance

Some meat
on her
bones

Climbing

To the petroglyphs over shale
and half-melted snow

Though the sun is bright
and the day is warm

I am thinking that I
cannot even read "buffalo"

A few cow chips mar
the way

I cannot read "holy" or "squaw"
an "arrow" may be the direction

Of the wind. But every one
knows "rain cloud"

Vultures float high
and quietly

Their language only
clear as my own

Is a caress

As dangerous
as all
of that?

When we got
through
we got up

And put our
clothes on
and went out

And bought
groceries
not even

The check-out
girl
seemed aware

That we had
just
finished

Kicking the shit
out of the
goddamned universe

As a bit of

Crisp chard
 fresh and
prickly

So you conceive
 of this
male member —

More often
 like wilted
lettuce

Your faint-hearted
 praise
is little amiss

Potherb it
 is; your
cauldron

Leaches it
 of every
juice & fibre

MEMORY, MEMORY

I smoked Stud Horse plug tobacco at the age
of ten we cut up old Sears Roebuck catalogues
to roll it in and used a little
bat shit for glue

Melissa goosing me impatiently
for a drag on the smoldering butt

We had an old gramophone Edison himself
must have despaired of ever getting
a patent on wheezing out a Blue Danube
sort of Hawaiian guitar

This little pussy Melissa

So we used Saran Wrap for a preventative
fuck-fuck like a barrel of snakes
mudderfugging it all up like a barrel of snakes

At twenty she said when we were children
you put your hand on me once
in a naughty way

Ten years later, at a party, she said
didn't I know you once somewhere before

Now twice married and more respectable
that I ever guessed anyone could be
she said coolly behind the potted palms
on the marble balcony

What

does Saran Wrap remind me of— Why, of course
your mother made weiners for us one day
we picnicked in the sand lot
there was some strange humming filled the air
you cooked them over a sterno flame

Several children

Are playing
 one of them
is naked

He is
 terror
stricken

It is
 an execution
they

Seem to
 have found
a cannon

How strange
 and
horrible—

No, it is
 grown men it
is a war

They think
 we are
winning

How nice it
 all has turned
out to be

I have shut

Out that thought

ravished of you

By expectations

are cooped up the chickens

For the night

are expected no foxes

With this

of moonlight brightness

And this

of snow depth

But there

rocking you sit

With the shotgun

your knees across

You are not waiting
for foxes

But for my declaration of intentions

Bailey I put

Two or three pitchers
there on the shelf
a small jug of baked earth
two or three
slim bottles pretty coloured

Just noticed a hen there too
about to lay an egg with a nest

If you get back before I do
there is sour wine and sweet
some kraut
pressed curds, and now an egg

Listen to that old hen
cackle
like a fool

I've been known

For a
cool
cat

For twenty-
seven years
on the

West coast
(in absentia)
it is hot

Hot
on this
tin roof

Down here
here in
Texas

A stranger

To speech

 have I spoken to my daughters
since five or seven

 when they came glowing
reporting a dead snake or a live frog leaping
from under a lifeless stone

Pausing to admonish

 it is bedtime now
go bathe, I will see you then

Have I seen them since

 to speak
more than to pass the time of day or remark
upon the lateness of the hour

 they have returned
when some dread had gnawed unyieldingly
that danger had beset them

 and they were gone

Their beauty has multiplied

 though its strangeness
has set them far removed, can this be mine
because I brought some pay that fed them
but have never dared to tell them

 you are

your own, your own

Have they shyly said

yes we knew, no word
is spoken, though their eyes shielding half
reproach and half despair

are certain warrant
of speeches voiceless there

We have traveled far since

alone, alone

Their message

Is in the neat patch-work
of their farm land
 naked and clean
in the keen light
of the thin atmosphere

Shocked grain
 and windrows
of sweet clover left to cure
in the warm light

This is a people who love
the earth
 this is the song
cool in the ears
and which
there are no words to

AN ELEGY UPON THE DEATH
OF MARTIN LUTHER KING
APRIL 5, 1968

The season's

Awkward, crippled might
smote down upon
the lilies

Breaking light
in its bold roar
against renewal

The clink of silver
softer than
the dawn cock's crowing

Easter, we sing
we sing
eternal Easter

The war

Will end in its own
good time

depend upon it
as an apparition. The gunner
or the whore

so I have seen no one
levelled on the burning plain

The sad soldier crazy for a piece from home
blanched hunger on the level land

No hand grappling the throat
taut with terror

the silken flood of denial
staining the broken breasts, the thighs

The child screaming there

We have moved against the opaque mist
shrouding our purest hunger

wailing our dream
of innocent denial

complying
with the tax notice rounding the season
pending voting time with its

consummate
ass-hole reaming

denying comfortably
it is our own

They are mostly blind and aged
beneath
the roar of battle sounds
the general on his reassuring TV tour
do not
pause to wonder there
to rescind the answer
to voice an even moment of despair

The terror's feigned
it's only children's voices crying

THE POET FACING UP TO LIFE

There you have him in
the bald-faced lie

Loving everything
he must
deny it

Knowing only
a woman he loves

A particular woman
there he
faces up to life

The question now

Is what can I
contribute
to the bull-shit

Fantasy of
modern man
being as I am

A dream-maker
of sorts
here is my

Handout
to tell them they
are awake

To tell them
they are not
dreaming

This is the dream
they cherish
most of all



70's

THE NOOSE

With no intention of making it easy

The winter itself alone
has beaten
a path to my door

I have made neither
nor mousetraps

Hangman, hangman
I beseech your services

For I have started
neither a fire
nor the cry of fire

They are still

Digging
from the substrata
of Corinth and Athens

Those delicate
fragile
tear vials

That my wife
loves so
perfect, intact

Though delicate
as a Robin's
egg

Here we are
back now
in USA

What can be done
with these
goddamned throw-a-ways

Six I have
emptied
before lunch

And the day
is hardly
begun

I haven't spoken

Much about
the escarpments
of my soul

But my
backbone and
my ribs

Jut or heave
in crooked
prominent

Ways, bespeaking
I might
suggest

More than
meets the
casual eye

If it is neat

To plunge in a barren waiting
if you cannot believe
you will work it
out

If you mean what you say
but all
the shit I have said
I couldn't work it out either
if
I plunged

With Li Po
with Crane
with Weldon Kees

I couldn't work it out

In any case
I
am sorry John Berryman was
driven there too

Seeking to

Make

the elastic leap
so, the poetic line can go
right to the end
of the chalk board
out the door
and down the hall

And it's about as useful
as squeezing out toothpaste
right on down the whole
handle of the toilet brush

It may exhaust the tube
but it will never
get the shit
from between your teeth

My breathing

I am pushing it
slowly to the ceiling

God, say, is pushing it
slowly back down again

Who'll tire first
of a dull game

Where we

Were not intended
to converge

Our congruences
climb a blank

Wall, transcend
outer space

One X

Rated movie with
loads of ass

female, backside
nice, round, firm
buttocks

and the crack
of the ass clean
and symmetrical

Seven women

short and tall
blonde, brunette, and red-head
with the self-same

American Beauty
calendar model behind

How do they do it

I mean
why do they

Am I perverse

in craving a few
humanly imperfections

instead
of this great, perfect, generalized
mythical butt

With no character

and without compassion

The ash

That retains your form
I am dried out too

circling

an insubstantial image

impaled

upon a thorn burning
in my mind

The fire itself was insubstantial

[illegible]

The circle
still burns
within my mind

What has been

My response
to defeat
sweet talcum

For my butt
and deodorant
under arm

So all my harm's
at bay
as I approach

The richest
bitches in
their Cadillac

Sedans
I stomach
rebuff

As no diamond
in the rough
I'll be

Their Pekinese
upon
a string

Your existence

Is not
your own
when he

Steps
inside
the door

When he
steps
out the

Door, the shards
of
his existence

Remain jutting
out
from the walls

Jutting up
from
the floor

If my ears

Were
 less like
the handles of a jug

If I could
tuck them away
neatly
before courting

As with
a codpiece maybe

Not a camouflage

Something short
of surgery

Watching a brindle

Spotted dog

following his
sniffer through the snow
noting his taut excitement
at one weed here

another there

at a foot print
a tenuous trail
a tumbled stone
a turd

or where
a bitch has peed

How poverty stricken we became
since standing

and walking

as we say

upright

Some may still breathe deep
on rare air

with

a far off tingling memory
of salt spray home

Most note only

the cooking odours

of bread and meat
or women

camouflaged as
exotic flowers

It is not

Dreaming

that returned me
back to where I was

the will
of time perhaps, möbius caught
or some stripped gear

that chill
whir I know I'll get my ass
caught in
whatever neat plans
I've forsworn to climb a hill
however steep
and keep out of sight
forever

So here I am
and it's not even night

I'll light a candle for ritual's sake
nor will it take me
half the wick to know
I'll set out weary at dawn's light

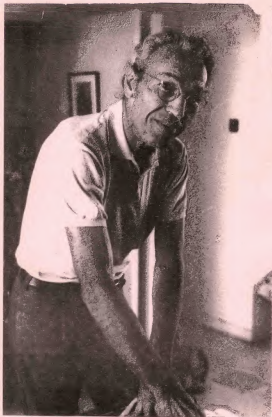
The tone

Of some muted horn muted with sea sound
it is not light yet
I smell some thick smoke
feel some thick vapour
there is the feel of sea
through the timbers
some harbor
of night
we are getting out of
before dawn

The tone of some forgetting
a few lights making themselves
sadly known
moving away now

I think there may be someone
I think there might have been someone
there is a track
 dim and unwanted
there on the trackless sea

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